

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

FEBRUARY 2011

IMAGINE A HIGH-SPEED FUTURE

Faced with full-body scans and pat-downs at airports and traffic choked highways, Americans may say “enough!” and demand a transportation alternative that’s already embraced by America’s biggest competitors. While we’re still waiting for construction to begin on the first mile of true high-speed rail in the U.S., other countries aren’t sitting still.

China, which recently passed Japan as the world’s No. 2 economy, now has the world’s fastest trains. By the time its complete in a decade, China will have invested \$300 billion in a 16,000-mile system that operates at speeds up to 220 mph. Despite starting later, China will have a bigger and faster network than France, which ran its first high-speed trains in 1981, and Japan, which has had them since 1964.

Great Britain, the country that invented the railroad, has been slower than its European neighbors to embrace high-speed rail. Now it’s planning a 250-mph Y-shaped network that would connect London with Birmingham and eventually northern England and Scotland.

When President Barack Obama sowed the seeds for a U.S. high-speed rail network a year ago, advocates cheered. By the fall of 2010, however, the initiative got swept up in midterm election politics.

Despite the tens of thousands of New Jersey commuters who depend on a crowded, century-old rail tunnel to reach New York’s Penn Station, New Jersey’s Republican governor, Chris Christie, stopped a long-planned new Hudson River rail tunnel dead in its tracks.

In California, which aims to build a network of 220-mph lines to connect San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Francisco and Sacramento, opposition has mushroomed in unexpected places – even some technology savvy Bay Area enclaves don’t want high-speed trains in their backyards.

Meanwhile, Amtrak’s fastest trains in the U.S. rarely reach their top speed of 150 mph on the slow, twisting 400-mile corridor between Washington and Boston. Elsewhere, most of Amtrak’s long-distance trains can’t go faster than 79 mph and must compete for track space with lumbering freight trains, contributing to delays.

Despite these limitations, Amtrak ridership is strong and growing. In the 12 months that ended Sept. 30, 28.7 million riders boarded its trains, up 5.7 percent from the year before. Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor commands more than half of the air-rail market from Boston to New York, and about two-thirds of it from New York to Washington.

The Obama administration committed \$10.4 billion to fund high-speed rail projects from coast to coast. Let’s be clear. These funds will get new lines started and make improvements to existing ones, but it won’t be nearly enough to finish the job.

It took decades to build the original U.S. rail network, and

decades again to complete the Interstate Highway System. It may take a long time – and not to mention funding, vision and political will – to build a high-speed rail network in the United States.

But next time you experience the full-body airport scan – or the alternative pat-down – think for a moment about a fast, comfortable ride on a high-speed train you boarded without having to compromise your privacy and dignity

The time for high-speed trains has arrived. All aboard.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRON

As it does on every year, Caltrain offered free rides after 11:00 p.m. on New Year’s Eve. In addition, to accommodate all the revelers attending the New Year’s festivities in San Francisco, Caltrain ran four extra trains between San Francisco and San Jose. The extra trains left San Francisco at 12:45 a.m., 1:15 a.m., 1:45 a.m., and 2:15 a.m., January 1, making all local stops to the San Jose Diridon station.

January 1 also marked the beginning of Caltrain’s latest budget cutting efforts, calling for fare increases and service reductions, Caltrain fares increased by 25 cents per zone, with multi-ride tickets and passes adjusted accordingly. A one-way ticket between San Francisco and San Jose now costs \$8.50, an increase of 75 cents from the previous rate.

In addition to the fare increases, four midday trains were eliminated, reducing Caltrain’s weekday schedule to 86 trains. The trains eliminated were southbound Train Nos. 236 and 256, and northbound Train Nos. 237 and 257.

On the positive side, in response to rider suggestions, express service on weekends has been added. Two northbound and two southbound express trains have been added to the weekend schedule. The northbound trains leave San Jose Diridon at 10:35 a.m. and 5:35 p.m., arriving San Francisco at 11:39 a.m. and 6:39 p.m. The southbound trains leave San Francisco at 11:59 a.m. and 6:59 p.m., arriving San Jose Diridon at 1:03 p.m. and 8:03 p.m. The trains make intermediate stops only at Millbrae, San Mateo, Hillsdale, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.

As 2011 begins, work continues on three construction projects to improve safety and operations along the Caltrain corridor. The big one is a \$147 million project in San Bruno to elevate the tracks over San Bruno, San Mateo, and Angus Avenues, and build a new San Bruno station. Work also continues on two other projects: a \$40 million project at the Santa Clara station to build separate boarding platforms and a pedestrian tunnel, and a \$5.8 million project to improve eight crossings in Santa Clara County.



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PRR NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Feb. 2, 9, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 16, 23 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Feb. 4 PRS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Pacific Railroad**
 Fri. **Museum**, 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas
 Feb. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 19, 26 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas
 Sats.
 Feb. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 4, 18; Extra days: 11, 25. Com. Mtg.: 18.
 Feb. 11 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Board Room
 Fri. **MTA Building**. See details below.
 Mar. 2, 9, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 16, 23, 30 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Mar. 4 PRS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Location to be
 Fri. announced in March *Wheel Clicks*.
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 Fri. announced in March *Wheel Clicks*.
 Mar. 18 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes
 Fri. & Herbert, Commerce. All welcome, bring slides.

MEETING PROGRAMS by RUSS DAVIES

February 11: On this evening we'll see "**The Best of the PRM Collections, Part Two**," digital images. We're still going from hand to mouth regarding meeting locations. **Your February *Wheel Clicks* will arrive just in time to advise you of the location for this meeting. Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

March 11: Watch for the program and location in be announced in the March *Wheel Clicks*.

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING DETAILS

The **MTA Building** is adjacent to the east side of Union Station. **Parking** is available in the underground lot shared by the MTA and Union Station. The probable cost, \$5, or the **maximum, \$6**, depends on timing. Free parking is available at **Denny's** across the street from the MTA garage entrance **if you eat dinner there, and advise the Denny's Manager**. To get to the meeting from Denny's, **for safety**, cross the street at the traffic signal, and walk right into the covered MTA garage. Then follow the signs in the garage to the MTA Building elevators. The Board Room is on the Third Floor. You can also take any of the Metro rail lines, or Metro and other bus lines, that serve Union Station, as well as Metrolink.

OBITUARIES by KEN RUBEN

Jim Boyd, started in rail with Carstens Publications. He served as editor of Railfan & Railroad from the magazine's inception in 1974 until 1998, and continued as editor emeritus and author of the Camera Bag column until his passing.

Robert Lewis, a railroader who worked at the Pennsylvania Railroad and Bessemer & Lake Erie has died. He was a prolific rail photographer beginning in 1929, and was editor of Railway Age magazine for 49 years starting in 1947.

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by DAVID HOUSH

With the New Year underway, it seems a good time to review what your dedicated Museum crew has been doing recently to improve and upgrade our facility. It should be noted that much more is planned for 2011.

The first thing a current visitor will notice as they approach the entrance is that the once old and decrepit baggage cart now looks factory fresh thanks to the restorative talents of member Tom Geer. Above the door is a new sign by yours truly making it clear that the Museum is the official home of the Pacific Railroad Society. Once inside, a repeat visitor will notice that the displays have been freshened or replaced. I have loaned many models from my personal collection for our Pacific Electric, LARy, Santa Fe, and Southern Pacific displays. Other donated artifacts have been rearranged to be more meaningful. Labels and explanations have been added for our less know-

ledgeable visitors. Peter Balch has rearranged and upgraded our wall hangings to better suit the displays. Our goal to present railroad history in a professional format has taken a giant step forward.

The overall appearance of the Museum has been enhanced by the elimination of clutter. Our storage areas are undergoing modification so we can retain in an organized fashion artifacts and publications that are worth keeping. Tom Geer has played a key role in this area, and I also need to commend member Charlie Schultz for maintaining the cleanliness of the Museum and Library on a regular basis. I think it is safe to say that we now have a much more professional-looking facility of which we can all be proud.

Basic maintenance needs cannot be overlooked. This is our task for the new year. We have just replaced a faucet which brought the baggage room sink back to life. Rotting window frames will soon be replaced, and we will be attacking our resident termites. A roofing problem has just come to light, thanks to our recent rains, and a new coat of exterior paint is on the horizon.

So now you are up to date on the status of your PRS Museum and Library. Feel free to visit – volunteers are always welcome.

ATLANTA REVIVES STREETCAR

For the first time in more than six decades, this traffic-choked Southern city expects to see streetcars running once more along its downtown streets. For some Atlantans, the city's \$72-million streetcar project – funded largely with a Department of Transportation grant awarded in October – is reason to celebrate and a welcome to a time when, much like the old days in Los Angeles, a trip across town meant riding the rails.

Once completed in 2013, the 2.6-mile rail line will cater to tourists, connecting downtown's Centennial Olympic Park – home to a Coca-Cola museum and the Georgia Aquarium – to the popular, but less-centrally located Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. Critics, however, note that the rail loop will do little to alleviate traffic in a metro area with the nation's third-worst commute, according to a recent *Forbes Magazine*.

After criticism in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* – including a front-page article headlined, "Pricey streetcar won't ease traffic" – Atlanta's mayor Kasim Reed wrote a Nov. 12 commentary defending the project, calling it an "important win" that would create 900 construction jobs in the near-term, and 5,000 more in the long-term once the line spurs economic revitalization in a struggling chunk of inner city.

"We compete every single day against cities like Las Vegas, Orlando and Washington, D.C.," he said. "All of the cities we compete against are moving competitively toward light rail." Reed also noted that he was instrumental in guiding a bill through the state Legislature this year that could allow the metro region to fund more ambitious projects to unclog traffic.

Critics of the streetcar have wondered if tourists will really be lured onto a route that will take them along what is now a struggling area dotted with a few small businesses, but also empty lots and storefronts and pervasive homelessness.

A.J. Robinson, president of the business group Central Atlanta Progress, is convinced that the romance of the streetcar will prevail. "People find, for whatever reason, much more of

a connection to riding a streetcar," he said. [Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR TRYING TO REFINANCE

"The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have become the nation's busiest gateway for international trade in part because of the Alameda Corridor," said economist John Husing. Moody's Investors Service decision to downgrade certain bonds issued by the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority in December left economists wondering why.

The reason? The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are celebrating one of their biggest one-year increases in trade in the last 25 years. That means it's also a good year for the Alameda Corridor, the 20-mile express route built to speed the flow of cargo from the ports to the region's railroad hub and on across the U.S.

The transportation authority has nearly \$2.1 billion in outstanding senior and subordinate lien bonds from the construction of the corridor, which opened in 2002. Moody's said it lowered its rating on the \$992 million worth of subordinate lien bonds because it feared that the post-recession surge in international trade would not continue next year. Its rating on the senior lien bonds remained the same.

The corridor's governing board had hoped to refinance its debt by the end of the year through a Federal Rail Administration loan. But on December 14, federal officials said a decision had been postponed pending "further discussions ... concerning the terms of the proposed loan." The upshot, economist Husing said, is that the refinancing will cost more, especially if the federal loan is denied and the transportation authority has to seek conventional public financing. (Borrowing from the ports would be a last resort.)

Husing thinks the problem is serious enough to warrant lobbying from the California delegation in Congress to push through the debt refinancing. He said it's a national issue because the corridor handles almost 20% of the nation's Asian imports.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

PASSENGER TRAIN SAFETY NEEDS FUNDING

There is an agency exclusively dedicated to building bridges and underpasses to separate freight trains from automobiles. But there is no agency dedicated to the same safety advance for passenger trains. The fact that freight warrants a higher priority than people should change.

The very successful Alameda Corridor sped up freight traffic from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and later spawned the Alameda Corridor East, an agency birthed by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments. The ACE has built grade separations at 20 crossings and improved at-grade intersections at 39 others in the San Gabriel Valley. The impetus is to keep trade flowing from one of the busiest ports in the nation by keeping container-laden freight trains filled with food, fuel, electronics and more, traveling fast and unimpeded – with autos out of their way.

Many of the ACE overpasses/underpasses also separate Metrolink trains from the roadway because the two tracks were adjacent – including the Ramona Boulevard underpass in El

Monte and the Brea Canyon Road underpass in Diamond Bar/Industry. Southern California needs another ACE-like agency to direct funding to Metrolink to help prevent car and passenger train collisions, utilizing either better gates or grade separations.

Newspaper Staff Writer Maritza Velazquez has found that Metrolink ranks No. 1 among rail agencies in commuter-rail collisions in the state. With 44 crashes since 2007, it is the most dangerous system in the country. Los Angeles County leads all others in the state with a total of 88 train collisions in the last three years.

One way Metropolitan Transportation Authority's ever-expanding light-rail system has factored in safety is through special four-way gates installed so drivers waiting at an intersection with flashing red lights can not drive out of the traffic lane. The MTA has installed these at many Gold Line crossings, including those in Pasadena at Glenarm Street and Del Mar and California boulevards. Along the Metro Blue Line from Los Angeles to Long Beach, quad gates have reduced accidents involving motorists by 90 percent, according to the MTA.

Metrolink, a different system from Metro and sometimes running on tracks shared by freight trains, has 331 at-grade crossings and 235 over or under crossings. With quad gates costing from \$350,000 to \$1 million, the cash-strapped agency can not fund these by itself. And for the most dangerous intersections, separated crossings should be considered.

Funding infrastructure improvements, as by federal or other governments, create jobs and help the economy, which would also have the benefit of reducing injuries and saving lives.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

AAR JANUARY STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

by CHARLES VARNES

The Association of American Railroads reported that on Jan. 1, 2011, 316,271 freight cars were stored. For the third straight month this equals 20.8 percent of the fleet.

It is a decrease of 1,539 cars from Dec. 1, 2010.

For the year 2010 the number of freight cars stored on the first day of the month (and the percentages) was: January, 448,555 (28.7); February, 439,631 (28.2); March, 418,552 (26.9); April, 387,029 (25.0); May, 369,090 (23.8); June, 368,343 (28.3); July, 365,279 (23.7); August, 359,471 (23.4); September, 348,712 (22.7); October, 331,074 (21.6); November, 318,275 (20.8); December 317,810 (20.8).

On Dec. 1, 2009, there were 451,096 freight cars in storage equal to 28.8% of the rail car fleet.

Figures are for the entire North American rail freight car fleet and include rail cars owned by railroads, leasing companies, shippers, and others. The total freight car fleet changes from month to month as new cars are added and old cars are scrapped.

[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

On May 1, 2011, Amtrak will kick off a year-long event celebrating its 40th anniversary. The kick-off celebration will take place in May with National Train Day and Employee Appreciation Day, and will continue through May 2012.

Amtrak employees at its Beech Grove shop are restoring one F-40, one P-40, three baggage cars, and an Amfleet food service car for a special 40th anniversary "museum train" that will travel across the country. The baggage cars will be turned into museum cars that will display exhibits of historic advertising, uniforms, photographs and other items of interest. The food service car will serve as a combination retail center and rotating exhibit space.

Four locomotives are also being repainted in historic colors to mark the event.

A commemorative book, *Amtrak: An American Story*, recounting the company's history and its plans for the future, and a documentary illustrating the history of Amtrak and the importance of Amtrak to this country are being produced. Both of these items will be available for purchase.

Historical On-Time Train Performance

The December 2010 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	December 2010	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	85.2%	87.1%
Texas Eagle	77.4%	67.0%
Heartland Flyer	90.3%	79.5%
Southwest Chief	82.3%	77.4%
California Zephyr	64.5%	49.2%
Empire Builder	33.9%	72.1%
Coast Starlight	75.4%	87.9%
City of New Orleans	72.6%	81.1%
Pacific Surfliner	69.3%	75.8%
San Joaquin	93.8%	90.6%
Capitol Corridor	97.4%	93.9%
Amtrak Cascades	75.9%	72.8%
Michigan Services	40.0%	57.8%
Hiawatha	83.8%	88.3%
Missouri River Runner	89.5%	90.9%
Acela Express	84.5%	80.7%
Northeast Regional	74.6%	74.9%

LONG DISTANCE ROUTES

Coast Starlight

Due to Union Pacific track work being performed near Santa Barbara, Calif., and Eugene, Ore., *Coast Starlight* Trains 11 and 14 will operate approximately two hours later as indicated below:

Train 11 Schedule Change – Effective January 3

Train 11 will depart all stations on the route approximately two hours later. This schedule change becomes effective with Train 11 that departs Seattle on Jan. 3 and arrives in Los Angeles the following day.

This schedule change will remain in effect through the train's departure from Seattle on March 31 and its arrival in Los Angeles the following day.

Train 14 Schedule Change – Effective January 2

Train 14 will depart all stations on the route approximately two

Guadalupe-Santa Maria and Lompoc Surf

*During these periods, service will not be provided to or from Lompoc-Surf, and limited motorcoach service will be provided at Guadalupe-Santa Maria. Passengers may instead utilize motorcoach service that will be provided to and from Lompoc city and Santa Maria.

Amtrak Cascades

Track work being performed by Union Pacific Railroad will affect Trains 508 and 514, as described below:

Train 508

January 3 through April 1

Beginning Jan. 3 through April 1, Train 508 will be canceled. Passengers planning travel between Eugene, Portland and Seattle may make reservations aboard *Coast Starlight* Train 14 or other *Amtrak Cascades* trains.

Train 514

January 3 through April 1

Beginning Jan. 3 through April 1, *Amtrak Cascades* will operate a temporary train between Portland, Seattle and intermediate stations. Train 514 will depart Portland at 5:15 p.m. and arrive at Seattle at 8:50 p.m.

Thruway Motorcoaches 5514 and 5544

During this period, *Thruway* Motorcoaches 5514 and 5544 will be established to allow passengers to make connections in Portland with Train 514.

Motorcoach 5514 will depart Eugene at 2:10 p.m., Albany at 3:00 p.m., Salem at 3:35 p.m., and arrive in Portland at 4:45 p.m.

Motorcoach 5544 will operate on an earlier schedule. It will depart University of Oregon at 2:30 p.m., Eugene at 2:55 p.m. and arrive in Portland at 4:45 p.m.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Acela service began operating on Dec. 11, 2000. During the decade the Acela has been operating, its share of travelers in the Washington, D.C. to New York and the New York to Boston markets has increased as shown in the following tables.

Washington to New York			
	2000	2009	2010*
Rail	37%	61%	69%
Air	63%	39%	31%

New York to Boston			
	2000	2009	2010*
Rail	20%	50%	52%
Air	80%	50%	48%

*2010 figures are for the first three quarters of the year.

DEPOT DOINGS

Los Angeles Union Station To Be Sold

ProLogis, the owner of Los Angeles Union Station, will sell the property to TPG Capital as part of a \$505-million deal that also includes four shopping centers, two office buildings, 11 mixed-use projects with related land and development agree-

ments, two residential development joint ventures, certain ground leases and other right-of-way leases.

The transaction is expected to be substantially completed in the first quarter of 2011

Denver-based ProLogis acquired Los Angeles Union Station as part of the 2005 takeover of Catellus Development Corp.

NEW FOOD SERVICES

A new Subway Sandwich Shop opened December 28, 2010 at 11:03 a.m., and Ken Ruben was given a discount for being the first customer. He thinks the shop is great for travelers on Metro, Amtrak, and Metrolink. It occupies the former Railway Media location at the east end of the passenger waiting area. Also a few days before the 28th a mini Sees Candy Shop opened at 2:00 p.m. for the traveling public. Their regular hours are 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. daily.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by **DICK FINLEY**

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

Crews the first week of January started work on a seismic retrofit project for a Metro Gold Line rail bridge with the work expected to cause traffic delays through April. The \$174,000 federally funded project, to be completed in two phases, will reduce traffic lanes on Huntington Drive and Second Avenue in Arcadia.

During the first, seven-week phase, eastbound Huntington and northbound Second will be narrowed to one lane and a left-turn lane for each direction. Pedestrian access will be eliminated on the south and east sides of the intersection during phase one.

During phase two, westbound Huntington and southbound Second will be reduced to one lane and a left-turn lane for each direction. Pedestrian access will be eliminated on the north and west sides of the intersection.

"The county found out that about 200 bridges are inadequate" to withstand a magnitude-7 earthquake, said Neil Munaweera of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. "We are retrofitting the bridges (so) they will not collapse in case of a major earthquake."

The railroad bridge at Huntington and Second will be used by the Metro Gold Line, which will run through Arcadia as part of the \$690 million Gold Line Foothill Extension from Pasadena to Azusa due to be completed in 2014. "What they're doing will benefit the project, because they will retrofit (the railroad bridge) and we will be using it," said Lisa Levy Buch of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority.

"It has to be done," said Allen Kizuka, who was visiting near the bridge, which goes diagonally across the intersection. "If they are going to run the Metro Line through there, I'd rather have the bridge retrofitted and not fall on me."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

EXPO LINE BIDDERS UNDER NEW SCRUTINY

Builders of the Expo light rail line in Los Angeles on January 6 sought to re-evaluate two bidders on the project after an initial review uncovered a trail of federal investigations, allegations of fraud, past construction problems, and payout of millions of dollars in damages.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority ordered a more in depth performance analysis of the Skanska/Rados and

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During phase two, westbound Huntington and southbound Second will be reduced to one lane and a left-turn lane for each direction. Pedestrian access will be eliminated on the north and west sides of the intersection.

“The county found out that about 200 bridges are inadequate” to withstand a magnitude-7 earthquake, said Neil Munaweera of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. “We are retrofitting the bridges (so) they will not collapse in case of a major earthquake.”

The railroad bridge at Huntington and Second will be used by the Metro Gold Line, which will run through Arcadia as part of the \$690 million Gold Line Foothill Extension from Pasadena to Azusa due to be completed in 2014. “What they’re doing will benefit the project, because they will retrofit (the railroad bridge) and we will be using it,” said Lisa Levy Buch of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority.

“It has to be done,” said Allen Kizuka, who was visiting near the bridge, which goes diagonally across the intersection. “If they are going to run the Metro Line through there, I’d rather have the bridge retrofitted and not fall on me.”

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

EXPO LINE BIDDERS UNDER NEW SCRUTINY

Builders of the Expo light rail line in Los Angeles on January 6 sought to re-evaluate two bidders on the project after an initial review uncovered a trail of federal investigations, allegations of fraud, past construction problems, and payout of millions of dollars in damages.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority ordered a more in depth performance analysis of the Skanska/Rados and

the URS/Shimmick joint ventures – two prospective finalists competing for a contract to build the \$1.5-billion second phase of the light-rail system from Culver City to Santa Monica.

The inspector general's office of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority will handle the more detailed analysis, which includes contacting previous clients to assess each company's performance and responsibility on other construction projects.

Skanska executives could not be reached for comment, but Steve S. Rados, co-president of Rados Inc., defended Skanska USA Civil West as a "first-rate outfit" that he had no reason to doubt. He added that he has no problem with the new performance review.

According to the inspector general, URS' partner in the joint venture, Shimmick Construction, based in Oakland, was involved in a dispute with Bay Area Rapid Transit over whether a pedestrian bridge was improperly welded. A Shimmick spokesman said the issue has been resolved without a finding of fault on the part of the company.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

SEATTLE

Washington Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond says the state is more than happy to take millions of dollars in high-speed rail money that other states don't want. The governors of Ohio and Wisconsin oppose rail project that would have cost \$1.2 billion, so U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said December 9 that the money will go to states eager to have it. Washington is getting \$161 million.

Hammond says the money will be used to further improve passenger rail service between Portland and British Columbia. The exact projects will be determined later, but she says they could include more locomotives, rail cars and track improvements, which will mean more jobs for the state. Hammond says Oregon will get about \$1.6 million.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

HIGH-SPEED TRANSIT CENTER QUESTIONED

Some prominent Orange County officials are questioning the wisdom of building a long-planned mega transit center in Anaheim that would help deliver tourists to Disneyland and link local rail and bus services to the state's proposed bullet train.

Several board members of the Orange County Transportation Authority say they doubt that the so-called ARCTIC station is eligible to receive about \$99 million currently earmarked for the project from a county half-cent sales tax. They say the Measure M road and transit money should be used to pay for improving existing stations, not building new ones.

They also assert that if the state's high-speed rail project is canceled because of money problems, it could turn the \$184-million station into a lost cause. According to ARCTIC's environmental impact report, about 99% of the station's train passengers would come from high-speed rail.

According to Measure M's guidelines, projects at Metrolink stations that are financed by the sales tax must accommodate planned high-speed rail systems, such as the California bullet train. If that \$43-billion project doesn't receive adequate funding, it might not reach Anaheim.

"This is not infrastructure for high-speed rail. It is now

called a stand-alone station," said Shawn Nelson, Orange County Supervisor and OCTA board member. "There was a rush to get ARCTIC funded because of high-speed rail. But Anaheim is no longer the first leg of the project. The question now is: Will there ever be a leg of high-speed rail" to the city of Anaheim?

Even if the high-speed rail project were canceled or substantially delayed, supporters contend that there would still be enough demand to justify the project. The city's current train station, which serves Metrolink and Amtrak passengers, is a modest stucco building on the north side of the Angel Stadium parking lot and west of the 57 Freeway. ARCTIC would be built on the east side of the freeway next to the Santa Ana River and near the city's Platinum Triangle redevelopment zone.

At the committee meeting on January 13, the panel of OCTA board members sought to change Measure M's funding guidelines. They also passed a motion to reiterate their support for the new station. The committee directed the OCTA's attorney to draft proposed revisions to the guidelines such that funding could be used for the relocation and replacement of Metrolink stations instead of just modifying existing ones.

Orange County Supervisor and OCTA board member John M.W. Moorlach – an opponent of high-speed rail – said in a recent interview that he has serious questions about providing more money for the Anaheim project. He noted that one proposed route for the bullet train would run on tracks that would be separate or "exclusive" from Metrolink and Amtrak rails so it could run faster and go over or under streets. But complications of crossing the 57 Freeway could preclude the exclusive route from reaching ARCTIC, he said.

Those engineering and cost concerns have prompted the high-speed rail authority to consider shelving the exclusive route in favor of sharing the existing corridor with Metrolink, Amtrak and freight railroads – something Nelson says has not yet been shown to work. If the tracks are shared, high-speed trains won't travel much faster than conventional trains, which experts say can't be improved to increase their speed.

"What is the point of doing high-speed rail when you can get the same performance with the equipment you now have?" said Moorlach. "There are some very compelling arguments."

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



Pacific Electric and Los Angeles Railway display area in Pacific Railroad Museum.
 Photo by Tom Geer



Restored baggage cart at entrance to Pacific Railroad Museum.
 Photo by Tom Geer



Descanso model (above) with ATSF and SP steam (in cabinet). Also note SP doodlebug and RDCs (in cabinet foreground).
 Photo by Tom Geer



Old Southern Pacific headquarters building in San Francisco on August 9, 2006.
 Photo by Dennis Gilkey



Model ice house behind refrigerator cars (top shelf). Other model cars (lower shelf). Selection of Pacific Electric box motors (bottom) with historic citrus crate labels in background.
 Photo by Tom Geer



Southern Pacific cab-forward, Class AC-10, No. 4213, built by Baldwin in 1942, is on the point of Train No. 58 Owl, the overnight train that operated from Oakland, California, to Los Angeles via Bakersfield. The first section is passing Penrose St. in Roscoe (Sun Valley) in 1949.
 Photo by John Petros